

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----032801 021441Z /46
O 021424Z DEC 77
FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2320
INFO USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 CAIRO 20034

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PBOR, XF
SUBJECT: CAIRO PREPARATORY CONFERENCE--SOME PRELIMINARY
- EGYPTIAN THINKING ON MODALITIES

REF: CAIRO 19902

1. HAVE BEEN SEEKING ASCERTAIN FROM EGYPTIANS THEIR THINKING ON MODALITIES OF CAIRO CONFERENCE. IT IS CLEAR THAT THEY ARE STILL IN THE PROCESS OF STUDYING VARIOUS ASPECTS OF CONFERENCE AND HARD AND FIRM DECISIONS HAVE YET TO BE MADE. FOLLOWING OBSERVATIONS ARE BASED MAINLY ON TWO TALKS WITH ACTING FONMIN BOUTROS GHALI (ONE THIS MORNING) AND WITH MININFO ABDEL MONEIM EL SAWI. FOR TIME BEING THEIR COMMENTS SHOULD BE VIEWED AS PRELIMINARY THINKING.

2. DATE: AS REPORTED ELSEWHERE, GHALI IS AGREEABLE TO A DECEMBER 14 CONVENING DATE, BUT DOES NOT YET WISH TO MAKE AN ANNOUNCEMENT. HE EXPRESSED PERSONAL VIEW THAT AN ANNOUNCEMENT COULD PROBABLY BE DELAYED UNTIL AROUND DECEMBER 10. HOWEVER, IF SYRIAN AND PALESTINIAN REPLIES ARE IN EARLIER, ANNOUNCEMENT WOULD BE MADE EARLIER.
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3. DELEGATION NUMBERS AND LEVELS: GHALI KNEW THAT BEN-ELISSAR AND ROSENNE WILL REPRESENT ISRAEL. HE ALSO KNEW THAT ATHERTON WOULD HEAD USDEL. ASKED HOW LARGE OUR DEL MIGHT BE, I TOLD HIM OUR TENTATIVE THINKING IS THAT IT WILL BE LIMITED TO DEPUTY ASST SECY STERNER AND ATHERTON'S PERSONAL ASSISTANT, MS KAMER, PLUS A FEW SECURITY PEOPLE.

GHALI OPINED SMALL DELEGATIONS BEST, BUT SAID HE HAD NOT YET DECIDED WHO WILL REPRESENT EGYPT.

4. LENGTH OF CONFERENCE: EGYPTIAN SECURITY PERSONNEL TELL US THAT THEY ARE PLANNING FOR A CONFERENCE OF AT LEAST THREE DAYS. GHALI TOLD ME TODAY CONFERENCE MIGHT LAST AS MUCH AS TWO TO THREE WEEKS, DEPENDING ENTIRELY UPON HOW THINGS GO. HE VIEWED THE CONFERENCE, INCIDENTALLY, AS THE BEGINNING OF WHAT HE EXPECTS WILL BE A LONG NEGOTIATING PROCESS BEFORE THE PARTIES CAN GET TO GENEVA. HE ACKNOWLEDGED THAT IT IS DIFFICULT TO MAKE THIS POINT TO THE EGYPTIAN PUBLIC, WHICH IS HOPING THAT CAIRO CONFERENCE WILL SETTLE EVERYTHING. IT WILL BE A TRICKY MATTER FOR GOE TO HANDLE, BUT THAT PROBLEM WILL BE FACED WHEN IT ARISES.

5. LOCATION: GHALI SAID THAT, HAVING IN MIND ACCOMMODATION AND SECURITY PROBLEMS, HIS MFA WORKING GROUP HAD GIVEN CONSIDERATION TO VARIOUS LOCATIONS, AMONG THEM ASWAN AND ALEXANDRIA. WHEN I EXPRESSED FERVENT HOPE ASWAN WOULD NOT BE CHOSEN BECAUSE OF LACK OF COMMUNICATION FACILITIES, GHALI INDICATED BOTH ASWAN AND ALEXANDRIA HAD BEEN REJECTED. MEETING WILL BE IN CAIRO. DELEGATIONS AND STAFFS WILL BE HOUSED AT MENA HOUSE (NEAR PYRAMIDS) AND FORMAL MEETINGS WILL ALSO TAKE PLACE THERE. PRESS, SECURITY AND OTHER STRAPHANGERS WILL BE HOUSED IN NEARBY NEW OBEROI AND JOLIE VILLE HOTELS.
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6. SCENARIO: ASKED IF AN AGENDA HAD YET BEEN DRAWN UP, GHALI SAID NO. MFA WORKING GROUP IS CURRENTLY CONSIDERING THREE SCENARIOS: ONE WOULD HAVE CONFERENCE DEAL ENTIRELY WITH PROCEDURAL ISSUES, A SECOND ENTIRELY WITH SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES AND A THIRD WITH A MIXTURE OF PROCEDURAL AND SELECTED SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES. HE DID NOT KNOW WHICH WILL BE DECIDED UPON. MATTER WILL HAVE TO BE DISCUSSED WITH PRESIDENT SADAT AND HE WAS REASONABLY SURE THAT SADAT WILL NOT WANT A CONFERENCE FOCUSING SOLELY ON PROCEDURAL MATTERS. I TOLD GHALI OF THE PRESIDENT'S RECENT COMMENT TO PROFESSOR KHOURI AND ME THAT CONFERENCE SHOULD DEAL WITH BOTH PROCEDURAL AND SUBSTANTIVE PROBLEMS. GHALI WAS INTERESTED TO HEAR THIS AND EXPRESSED HOPE HE MIGHT BE ABLE TO MEET WITH THE PRESIDENT SHORTLY AFTER LATTER RETURNS TO CAIRO LATER THIS WEEK TO ASCERTAIN HIS VIEWS.

7. PRESS: GHALI IS CONCERNED ABOUT LARGE NUMBER OF JOURNALISTS AND TV PEOPLE WHO WILL WANT TO COME. BOTH FOR HOUSING AND SECURITY REASONS, HE BELIEVES NUMBER SHOULD BE LIMITED. HE WAS PLEASED THAT VP MUBARAK HAD ACCEPTED HIS RECOMMENDATION THAT EACH MAJOR ISRAELI NEWS-PAPER AND TV NETWORK BE LIMITED TO "ONE OR TWO" REPORTERS

(CAIRO 20033). ASKED ABOUT AMERICAN JOURNALISTS, GHALI SAID THEY WILL HAVE TO BE LIMITED IN THE SAME WAY AS THE ISRAELIS. OTHERWISE THERE WOULD BE A CHARGE OF DISCRIMINATION. HE WAS STILL WORKING ON DEVISING EQUITABLE FORMULA FOR PRESS REPRESENTATION AND IS TOYING WITH IDEAS SUCH AS BASING PRESS REPRESENTATION ON NUMBER OF NEWSPAPERS IN PARTICIPATING COUNTRY, THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE, THE NUMBER OF TV NETWORKS, ETC. AS YET, HOWEVER,

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 CAIRO 20034

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HE HAS NO CLEAR IDEA HOW HE WILL COME OUT ON THIS. (IN CONTRAST, MININFO EL SAWI TALKED LAST NIGHT ABOUT BEING ABLE TO TAKE CARE OF ANY NUMBER OF FOREIGN JOURNALISTS.) CONTROL CENTER FOR JOURNALISTS WILL BE SET UP AT MENA HOUSE AND AT CAIRO AIRPORT. JOURNALISTS, REGARDLESS OF NATIONALITY, WILL HAVE TO OBTAIN ACCREDITATION FROM CONTROL CENTER. IT IS POSSIBLE THAT AMBASSADOR GHORBAL MAY BE AUTHORIZED REGISTER AMERICAN JOURNALISTS AND TV PEOPLE WHO MAY WISH TO COME.

8. SECURITY: GOE VERY CONSCIOUS OF POTENTIAL SECURITY THREATS. EGYPTIAN SECURITY OFFICIALS TELL US THAT INNER SECURITY AROUND MENA HOUSE WILL BE HANDLED BY STATE SECURITY POLICE. EGYPTIAN MILITARY WILL MAN OUTER SECURITY PERIMETER. ALL ENTRY AND EXIT INTO MENA HOUSE AREA WILL BE CLOSELY CONTROLLED.

9. TOLD GHALI I EXPECTED SHORTLY TO RECEIVE FROM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV VARIOUS QUESTIONS PUT TO US BY THE ISRAELIS ABOUT MODALITIES FOR THE CONFERENCE. WHEN RECEIVED, I WOULD BRING THEM TO HIM FOR REPLIES. HE WAS AGREEABLE, BUT NOTED GOE'S THINKING ON SOME ASPECTS IS

STILL EVOLVING. ELTS

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